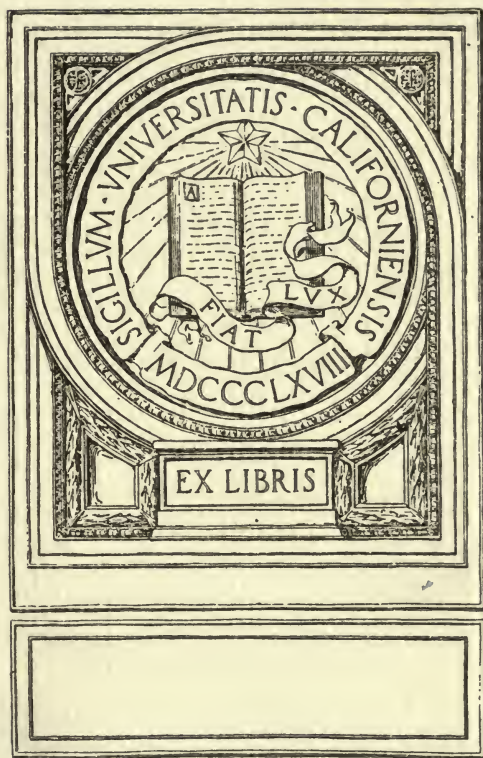


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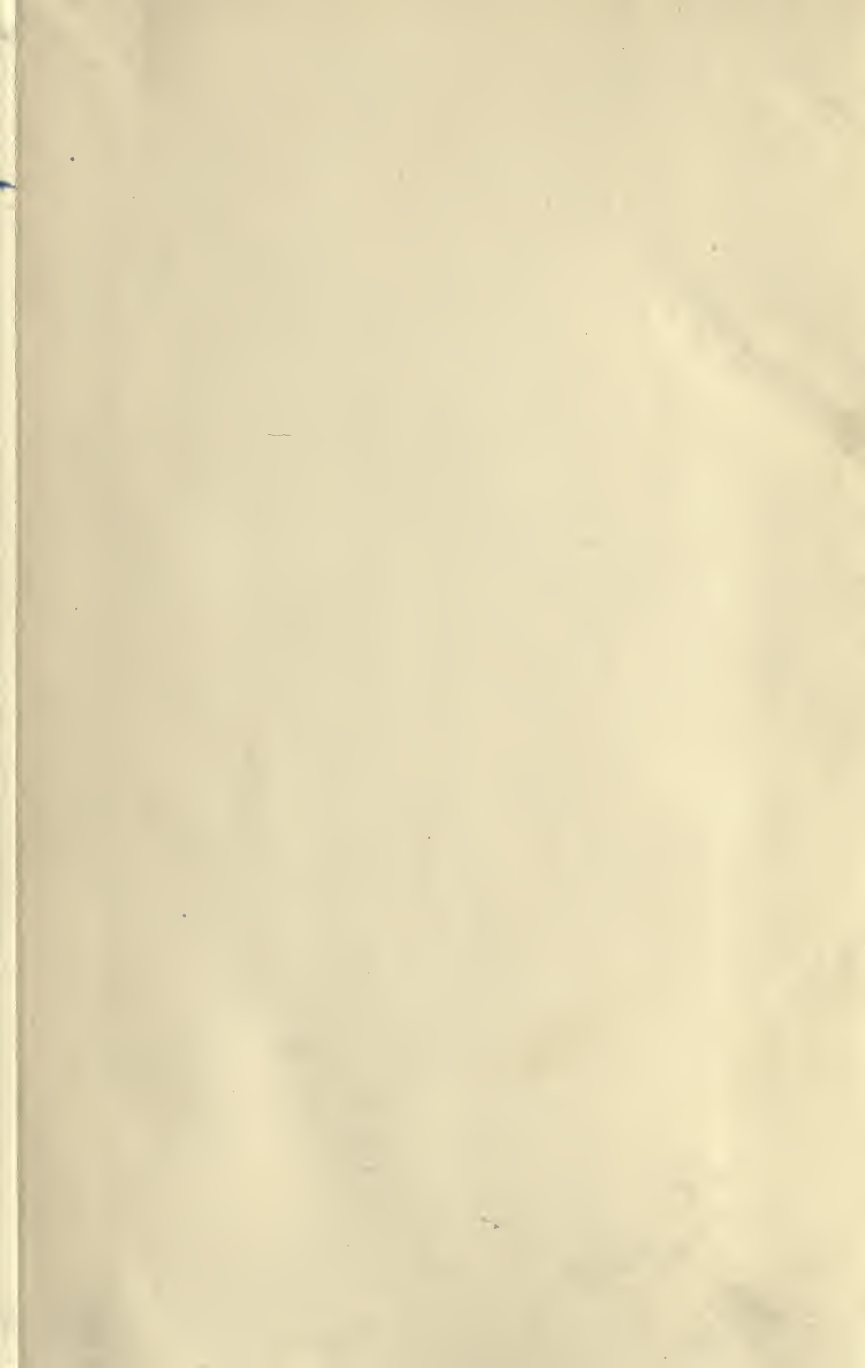


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ADDRESSES

AT THE

CELEBRATION

Brown

OF

THE COMPLETION OF THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ACADEMIC YEAR

OF

VASSAR COLLEGE,

• 25th Anniversary •

JUNE, 1890.



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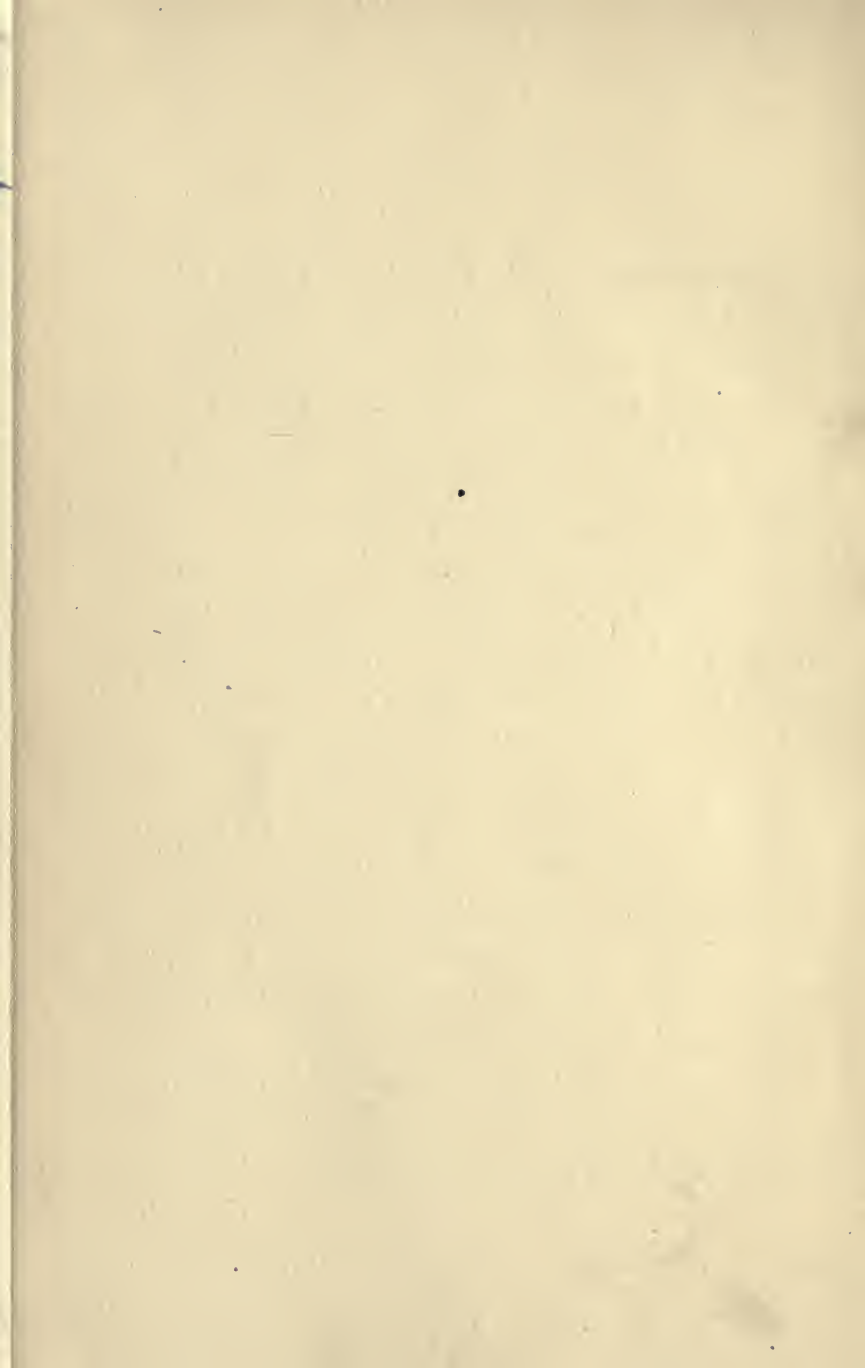
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It seemed fitting to the Board of Trustees of Vassar College to celebrate its twenty-fifth year of academic life, not merely as a recognition of its own work and history, but as recalling an event marking an epoch in the education of woman. A plan was arranged designed to embody both these aims. In addition to the usual exercises of Commencement week, a day was set apart for the anniversary exercises, the programme of which follows on another page. It provided beside for an address on Commencement Day by the President of the College, for a reception to the guests by the Trustees and Faculty, for a reunion of Alumnæ and former students, and for a dinner to the Alumnæ. The festivities continued from Monday till Thursday night. There were present delegates from many universities and colleges, large numbers of former students, and hundreds of other guests.

The week will be long remembered by all who were present, and the Trustees issue the addresses herewith printed as a memorial of it.



Exercises in the tent, Thursday, June 12, 1890.

PROGRAMME.

Overture—Magic Flute, *Mozart.*

PRAYER.

Address of Welcome, *The President.*

Historical Address, . . . *Benson J. Lossing, LL. D.*

Solo and Chorus—From Hymn of Praise, *Mendelssohn.*

Address,

Chancellor George William Curtis, LL.D., L.H.D. p. 22.

Cantata (composed for the occasion,) .

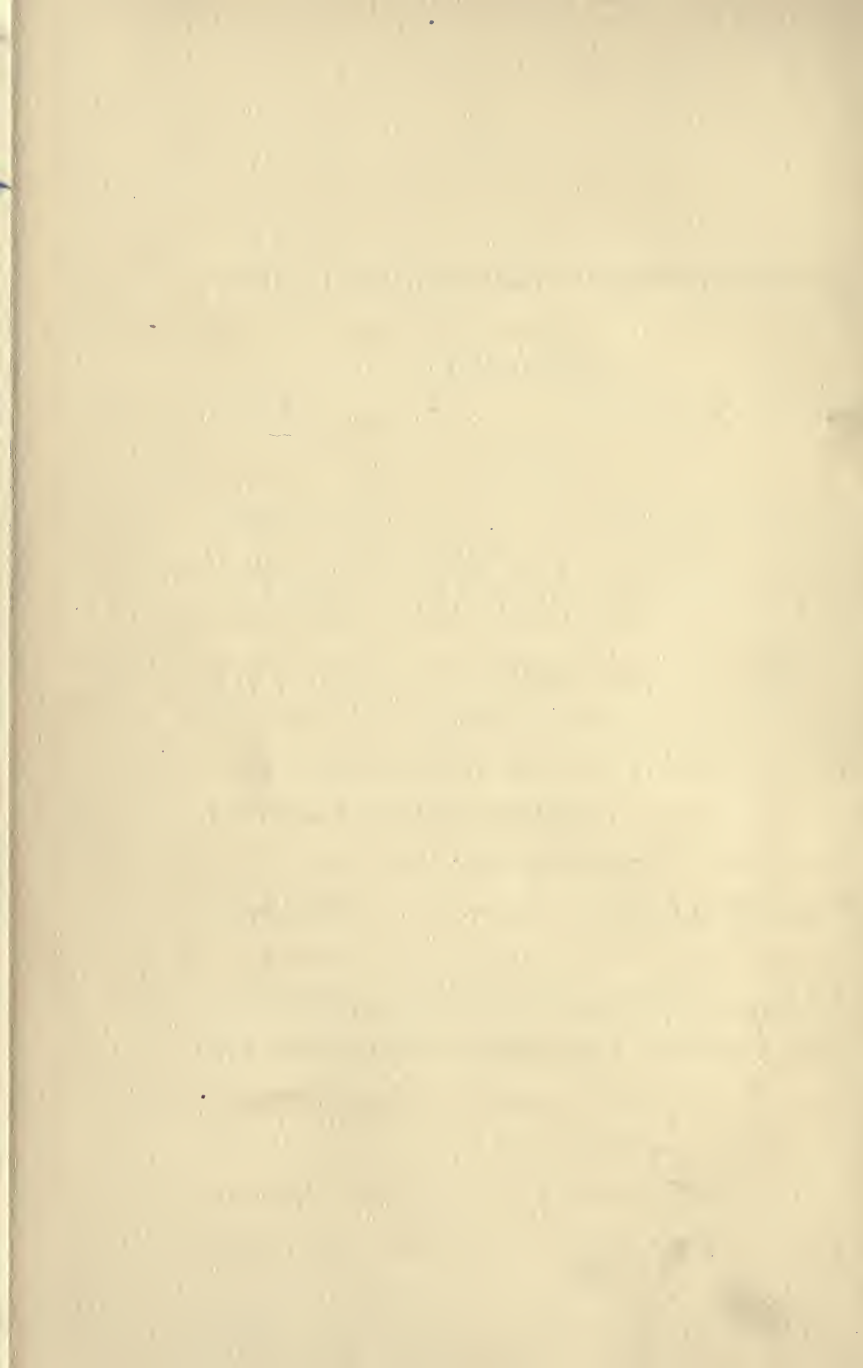
“I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart.”—*Psalm IX.*

. . . . *Frederic Louis Ritter, Mus. Doc.*

BENEDICTION.

March—From *Athalie*, *Mendelssohn.*

The music was furnished by the orchestra of the German Opera Company, of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. The singing was by a chorus of eighty students, under Dr. Ritter's direction.





ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

*Mr. President, Representatives of Universities
and Colleges, Alumnæ of Vassar College,
Ladies and Gentlemen:*

It is my proud privilege to welcome you to-day in the name of Vassar College, to participate in the exercises which mark the completion of twenty-five years of academic life. That, in itself, would have been small reason for asking you to leave your homes and work to come and rejoice with us. Twenty-five years in the life of an institution is but infancy ; but this twenty-five years in the great movement of woman's education marks an era in all educational history. That which many of our mothers and fathers had longed to see, and never saw ; that which good men and women had tried to realize in the face of unbelief and an unprepared world, was at last made possible by a woman's word and Matthew Vassar's splendid gift.

A great movement never springs full-armed from the brain of time. Sporadic efforts gather

at last into a great endeavor; streams of tendency unite in an irresistible flood: then we have an epoch. We gather to-day to celebrate that epoch, the beginnings of the higher education of woman as a distinct force in the world, as a movement designed to influence educational theory and practice in all time to come. Not to a college celebration, save as the inception of that college marks the epoch, but to the commemoration of twenty-five years of a history full of significance and hope for the world—your history as well as ours—we have called you together.

We rejoice together in the triumph of our cause; we gain fresh courage for the morrow as we remember what has been done in a single generation.

Welcome, then, from east and west, from south and north, welcome to this hour which is also yours. Welcome to this registering of a great victory over prejudice and traditional wrong. Welcome to the commemoration of this great progress in which we are all sharers,

and whose fruitage is of eternal import. In the name of the College I bid you welcome, —aye, in his name who would rejoice in this great day could he have foreseen the growth of a cause to which he gave his treasure and himself.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

BENSON J. LOSSING, LL.D.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :

My pleasing duty is to present to you a brief sketch of the Genesis of Vassar College, and so lead you to an intellectual banquet from which I will not long detain you.

At near the close of the last century, two brothers, James and Thomas Vassar, from the rich agricultural County of Norfolk, in far eastern England, arrived at New York. They were Dissenters of the Baptist order. James had a wife and four children, of whom Matthew, who became the Founder of Vassar College, was the youngest. Thomas was a bachelor.

In the Spring of 1797, this Vassar family bought and settled on a small farm near the (present) hamlet of Manchester, about a mile from these grounds. The stones of the foundation of their dwelling may still be seen a short distance below Manchester Bridge. The farm was a part of the beautiful valley of the Wappingi's Creek, which flowed along one side of

their possessions. As the summer advanced they were gratified by the apparition of many saplings on the borders of the stream, draped with the spiral vines of the wild hop, from the clustering blossoms of which they might distill the *lupuline* for making home-brewed ale, the delight of every English household. But barley for malt was wanting; so, in the fall, Thomas returned to England for that and other cereals, and in 1798 the first crop of barley ever garnered from the soil of Dutchess County was raised on the little Vassar farm.

When apples were ripening in September, there was well-brewed ale in the Vassar home. The thrifty family made it for sale to their thirsty neighbors; and it was not long before little Matthew, eight or ten years old, might have been seen, with his mother, on the road to Poughkeepsie in a farm wagon, with a barrel of ale, the freshest eggs and the yellowest butter, for which there was an ever ready market.

Little Matthew and his elder sister sometimes wandered over the half-wooded hills, towards

Poughkeepsie. On one occasion, when out nutting, they stood on a gentle eminence, now known as "Sunset Hill" within the College domain, and admired the scenery westward. "How I wish I owned these pretty woods and fields!" exclaimed the thoughtful boy, as he looked down upon the plain before him. Fifty years afterwards he *did* own two hundred acres of those "pretty woods and fields," including "Sunset Hill."

At the beginning of this century, the Vassar brothers sold their little farm, and James began the business of a brewer in Poughkeepsie. He designed to have Matthew as his assistant, when he should become old enough. When that time arrived, disliking the business, Matthew stole off secretly to seek his fortune in the "wide, wide world." He did not travel far. He walked to New Hamburg, eight miles, crossed the Hudson River, and became first a *drudge* and then a *clerk* in a country store near Newburgh, where he remained four years. Misfortunes impoverished his family, when the truant returned to

help them, with \$1.50 in his pocket, which he had saved from his earnings in "foreign service."

Young Vassar brewed ale and distributed it among the villagers with his own hands; and at the age of twenty he opened a shop in the basement of the Court House, for the sale of oysters and ale. He brewed and distributed his beverage by day, and at night attended to his customers at the "oyster saloon." He married at twenty-one and began housekeeping in apartments under the heavy rent of \$40 a year, which his father thought was very extravagant. The little deal table on which the first repast of the young couple was spread is preserved in "The Founder's Room" in the College.

By the practice of industry and thrift for thirty years, Mr. Vassar accumulated a large fortune, when he gratified a long-cherished desire by going to England and to the Continent with his wife. They were accompanied by Cyrus Swan (one of the survivors of the first appointed Trustees of Vassar College), then a young

lawyer, as a traveling companion. Being childless, and approaching three score years of his life, Mr. Vassar had thought much about the dispositions of his estate at his death. In London he became much interested in the hospital founded by Thomas Guy, and he resolved to found a similar institution at Poughkeepsie.

Years of active business passed away. Mr. Vassar occasionally alluded to the hospital matter in conversation with friends. One day he mentioned it to his niece, Miss Lydia Booth, an accomplished teacher and manager of a young ladies' seminary, at Poughkeepsie.

"Uncle Matthew," said Miss Booth, "I think I can propose something better than that. Found an institution for the higher education of young women—a real college."

The thought took root in Mr. Vassar's mind. His niece died suddenly. Her "Cottage Hill Seminary" was succeeded by another, at the head of which was Professor M. P. Jewett, a Baptist clergyman. He became a friend and confidential adviser of Mr. Vassar. When the

hospital scheme was laid before him, he said, in substance :

“A large hospital here would be out of place. If you desire to become a notable benefactor of your race, and make your name imperishable, follow the suggestions of your niece—found an institution that shall be to young women what Yale and Harvard are to young men.”

Mr. Vassar did not ponder long. His sagacity perceived that a rare opportunity offered for leading in a cause of profound interest to his country and to mankind. He brought the subject to the test of practical business calculation. He approved the project and engaged Professor Jewett to assist him in perfecting plans for founding a College for Women on a magnificent scale and the most liberal basis, in which neither sect nor creed, as such, should have controlling influence. Strongly attached to the Baptists by life-long association, he consulted more educators and educated men of that denomination than any other; but when it was proposed to place the college under the general control of the Baptists,

his more Catholic spirit instantly and emphatically dissented. In his address at the first meeting of the Board of Trustees he said :

“All sectarian influence should be carefully avoided ; but the training of the young should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious or the immoral.”

Such has ever been the sentiment, the policy and the practice of the managers of the institution.

With the legal and other assistance of Mr. Swan (who had been his trusted counselor during all the years of discussion) and Professor Jewett, Mr. Vassar proceeded cautiously in the great work of founding the institution that bears his name. It was a new thing under the sun.

In January, 1861, a charter was obtained from the Legislature of New York ; and on the 26th of February, twenty-nine gentlemen named in the charter as corporators, met at the Gregory (now Morgan) House, in Poughkeepsie, and were organized as a Board of Trustees of the inchoate institution. Their names were :

Matthew Vassar, Ira Harris, William Kelley, James Harper, Martin B. Anderson, John Thompson, Edward Lathrop, Charles W. Swift, Elias L. Magoon, S. M. Buckingham, Milo P. Jewett, Nathan Bishop, Matthew Vassar, Jr., Benson J. Lossing, E. G. Robinson, Samuel F. B. Morse, S. G. Constant, John Guy Vassar, William Hague, Rufus Babcock, Cornelius Du Bois, John H. Raymond, Morgan L. Smith, Cyrus Swan, George W. Sterling, George T. Pierce, Smith Sheldon, Joseph C. Doughty and Augustus L. Allen. They represented nearly every denomination of Christians.

The Board of Trustees was organized with William Kelley, *Chairman*; Matthew Vassar, Jr., *Treasurer*; Cyrus Swan, *Secretary*, and several standing committees. Only six of the first appointed Trustees are now on the earth; and only five of them are members of the Board.

At the completion of the organization, Mr. Vassar addressed the Board and in conclusion, said: "Gentlemen, I transfer to your possession and ownership, the real and personal property

which I have set apart for the accomplishment of my design." Near him, on a table, was a small tin box containing securities, and a deed of conveyance of two hundred acres of land for a college site and farm. He placed one hand on the precious casket, and with its key in the open palm of the other hand, he formally transferred to the custody of the Trustees, \$408,000 of his wealth.

The great Civil War had just begun; but the Founder and the Trustees did not halt. On the 4th of June, 1861, Mr. Vassar, in the presence of half a dozen persons, cast out the first spadeful of earth at a point where the trench to receive the foundation stones of the great structure, five hundred feet in length and five stories in height, was to begin. The work went on under the direction of James Renwick, the architect, during the four years of war—years of confusion, uncertainty and great fluctuations in values—and yet, so admirably were the funds of the institution managed by Treasurer Matthew Vassar, Jr., that, at the meeting of the Trustees in June,

1865, the property including the real estate and securities, had been increased in value to the amount of \$700.

The College edifice was now about completed. A President, Faculty and Instructors for the College were chosen. John H. Raymond, one of the Trustees, was elected President, and Hannah W. Lyman was appointed Lady Principal, or executive aid of the President. Also eight Professors and twenty instructors and teachers were appointed. The several departments of instruction were fairly furnished with excellent apparatus, and there was a nucleus of a library. Thus equipped, the College work began on September 20, 1865, with nearly 350 accepted students in attendance.

This auspicious beginning of the grand career of the first real College devoted to the higher education of women, gave intense satisfaction to the Founder. His earnest desire to have this result reached during his life-time was abundantly gratified. He lived nearly three years longer in the enjoyment of the rewards of grate-

ful benedictions which were everywhere bestowed. To his first munificent gift of over \$400,000, he added fully an equal amount by gifts while he lived, and by testamentary provisions. He purchased and presented to the College for the use of the Art Department, a large collection of valuable paintings and an art library at a cost of \$20,000.

At the annual meeting of the Trustees in June, 1868, while the Founder was sitting in a chair and reading his usual Address on such occasions, the manuscript was seen to fall from his hands. He was caught in the arms of one of the Trustees who was sitting near him. The vital spark was quenched. His great heart had ceased to beat. It seemed a fitting place for the Angel of Death to receive his spirit, for he was surrounded by his chosen friends and loving helpers in his great work. He was in the midst of fully 300 of his foster daughters, and was within the precincts of the magnificent monument which perpetuates his name and the memory of his deeds.

At the time of Mr. Vassar's departure he was

seventy-six years of age. In person, his stature was a little less than medium height. He was well proportioned and compactly built. His complexion was fair, with lingerings of the ruddiness of good health on his cheeks. The brown hair of his earlier years was plentifully mingled with the hoary tokens of age. His dark gray eyes beamed with the lustre of vigorous middle life and the radiance of unextinguishable good humor. His nose was of the Roman type and firmly set, and the general expression of his face was exceedingly pleasant to both friends and strangers, for in his countenance, whether in action or repose, was ever seen the perpetual sunshine of a gentle, cheerful nature.

It might have been said of Matthew Vassar as of Rowe's ideal :

“ Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silvered locks ;
He wears the marks of many years well-spent,
Of Virtue, of Truth well-tried and wise experience.”

ADDRESS.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, LL.D., L.H.D.

speaking before an educated, sympathetic audience begins by citing a historical reference

On a summer day like this, nearly fifty years ago, the anniversary of West Indian emancipation, Mr. Emerson described that event as "a day of reason, of the clear light, of that which makes us better than a flock of birds or beasts."

sits

It is another day like that, a day of another emancipation, of a distinct step of higher civilization, that we are assembled to commemorate. For events of historical importance the imagination craves a fitting scene and here the imagination is satisfied. We stand upon the banks of the Hudson and the Hudson is our most historic river. Its charm is blended of natural beauty, of patriotic story, of literature and legend. It was the channel by which Hendrick Hudson sought a shorter route to Cathay. It was the war path of France and Great Britain contending for continental dominion. Its possession was the tactical object of the war of our

independence. Upon its shores the controversy culminated in the decisive surrender of British arms and the open French alliance. Upon these shores, also, Washington put aside the crown, and at the mouth of the Hudson he saw retiring England furl her flag and sail away. At Kingston on the Hudson, sat the Convention that adopted the State Constitution. At Fishkill the commemorative Cincinnati was organized. Here in Poughkeepsie, beneath the watchful eyes of George Clinton, like the contending Gods in the Homeric legend, Alexander Hamilton and Melancthon Smith strove in the great debate upon the constitution of the United States, and here, New York consented to the constitution, and once more, upon the Hudson, the career of Washington reached its crowning glory as he entered upon the Presidency of the United States.

What memorable events have consecrated this river and these shores! What voices have thrilled the air of this prolific and prosperous valley! What noble figures have peopled this majestic scene! But its story does not end with

*vivid
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the revolution. With the golden age of peace the vast manorial estates of the Hudson gave to the river a singular social distinction and its shores were the renowned seat of magnificent hospitality. Towns and cities clustering beside it marked the advance of American prosperity. Following the Half-Moon of Hendrick Hudson, after just two hundred years, the Clermont of Robert Fulton moved sailless against the stream, and commerce and human intercourse were emancipated from dependence upon the coy and fitful wind. A little later, with simple Republican pomp and amid the happy truce of parties, the water of Lake Erie was borne down the Hudson to the sea, and a smooth and unobstructed way to the markets of the world was opened to the mighty North West. But still the beneficent river lacked one leaf in its chaplet. Its stately course through storied scenes, its shores teeming with prosperous content, its landscape of undulating and endless beauty from the Palisades to the Catskill and the softer rural reaches beyond, yet wanted the spell which holds

ex: but there is an unity
throughout.

the traveller's foot at every step in the lesser landscape of other lands, the spell of the genius which lifts them into literature and so gives to every cultivated mind in the world an indefeasible estate in the local landscape.

In a large sense the experiment of American independence was associated with the river. British dominion fell and the republic was formally inaugurated upon its banks. Upon the Hudson, Fulton's genius and Clinton's enterprise had given the quickening impulse to American invention and industry, and, at last, American creative literature was born under its spell. The shore at Tarrytown stretching backward to Sleepy Hollow, the broad water of the Tappan Zee, the airy heights of the summer Catskill, were at last suffused with the rosy light of literature by the kindly genius of Washington Irving. Burns and Scott have made their Scotland the Scotland of all the world. Every hill and stream and bird and flower of the beloved land is reflected individually and fondly in Scottish tale and song. The Scotchman with his

deep and strong national sentiment, a feeling which survives untouched by all acts of political union with the British empire, murmurs wherever he goes the legendary music of the Ayr and the Doon, of the laverock and the mavis, the Scottish landscape and the Scottish legend.

It is curious that our literature should have been born of a reaction of sentiment. It was all sermon until Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, and Bryant's muse was essentially Puritanic. But as the boy Irving used to escape from the severity of religious discipline by dropping out of the window and stealing to the play, so in his gentle genius our nascent literature at last escaped the sermon and came laughing into life. Not less striking is the fact that the first distinct creation of that literature should have been a characteristically un-American figure. Irving's genius was what in the old English phrase would have been called sauntering. It cast the glamor of idlesse over our sharp, positive and busy American life. Rip Van Winkle, the indolent and kindly vagabond, asserts the charm of day-dream and loiter-

ing against all the engrossing hurry of lucrative activity. At first he, and the grotesque Knickerbocker heroes, were solitary figures in our letters. But so strong is the magic of the Hudson that Rip Van Winkle on the western shore was soon joined by Cooper's Spy upon the eastern, and presently Leather Stocking, until long since Rip is but one of a goodly company. Yet still he holds his place. Another literary spirit, a freer impulse, greater genius and figures more commanding and elaborate, appear. But while one lurid *Scarlet Letter* spells Puritan, and the keen laughter of Hosea Biglow nails fast the counterfeit American, still Rip Van Winkle lounges idly by, and the vagabond of the Hudson is an unwasting figure of the imagination, the earliest, constant, gentlest satirist of American life.

These are but glimpses of the associations of the Hudson River. But they show how peculiarly identified it is with our history and literature, with our patriotism and national life. It is surely a singular felicity of fortune, that it should be also as intimately associated with the great

step of advancing civilization which we celebrate to-day, and that upon the shores of the Hudson should be founded the first amply endowed and adequately organized college for women. Like all important steps of social progress, the rise of such an institution is a development, not a sudden creation. Growth, not miracle, is the law of life. Even St. John's day, the longest day of the year, is not a sudden burst of splendor, it brightens gradually from the faintest flush of dawn. XThe rose-bush does not break into fullness of bloom on some happy morning in June, but with the warmth of early April the buds begin to swell and the green begins to deepen, and gradually like a Queen leisurely robing for her coronation, tint is added to tint, beauty to beauty, until it stands in the sovereign glory of perfect blossom. So our political constitution was not, as is sometimes said, an inspiration, it was an application. From the ancient customs of Swiss cantons, from the meadow of Runnymede, from the Grand Remonstrance and the Petition of Right, in steady Anglo-Saxon suc-

cession and with accumulating force, the principles of our constitution were derived. No one of them was new in our system, but the application of them at once to the States and to the Union of the States, this was unprecedented, this was the rose of dawn in which all the earlier deepening rays of light culminated in day.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that we are celebrating an event which was unheralded and had been neither attempted nor foreseen. The greatness of the occasion and the fame of Mr. Vassar ask no such impossible tribute. Every important movement, we are apt to say, is at last one man. It is true that great events in history are symbolized by certain names, as Columbus and the discovery of America, Sam Adams and American Independence, Samuel Romilly and the reform of the penal laws, Dr. Franklin and the lightning conductor, Garrison and the abolition of slavery, Henry Bergh and the compassionate care of domestic animals. But a leader is strong by the strength of others. He is sustained by what is called the spirit of the

age, and he follows, like a keen Indian guide in a company of white men, the trail which fore-runners have made. Columbus lived in an age of discovery. He heard more wisely than other men the voices which Charles Summer called "prophetic voices" concerning America, and he knew the reason why sailing west would bring him to the East what he sought. Leaders merely lead. They are only a little in advance. They mark the irritation of the stem at the point where the bud will appear. Men like John Howard and Pinel are signs of a quickening public sense of wrong in penal and curative systems, which responds effectively to their appeal. In Matthew Vassar matured the vague desire and tentative groping toward a complete opportunity for the equal higher education of women, by partial efforts, tentative experiments, intelligent schemes, for the same subject there had already been, and already signal progress had been achieved.

It is about a century since an active and constantly progressive interest in the higher, or more

unity
 leading
 to climax

truly, the better, education of women began. During the eighteenth century the schools of Prussia, the country in Europe which has most fostered the interests of education, had steadily declined, and the schools for girls were much less efficient than those for boys. The great impulse of the modern Prussian school system was given by the most famous of Homeric scholars, Frederick Augustus Wolf, who was invited to Halle in 1783 by Frederick the Great. Even the Prussian catastrophe at Jena in 1806 was not strong enough permanently to disturb that impulse, which only two years after the battle created a department of schools and placed William Von Humboldt at its head. It was under the influence of the same impulse which has produced the modern Prussian school system, that in 1804 what is supposed to be the first seminary for women teachers was founded in Prussia.

But still the general European feeling regarding the education of women was expressed by Mrs. Barbauld's exhortation to her sex. Remember, she says, to what Thackeray would have

called the young British female of a century ago, "your best, your sweetest empire is to please." Mrs. Barbauld was one of the most estimable of women and altogether superior to her own exhortation, which was simply that of every Circassian slave dealer hurrying his lovely captive to the Seraglio. Meanwhile in this country much of the freedom and equality which were vehemently declared to be the rights of human nature was yet waiting for recognition, and continued, and with all that has been achieved, still continues to wait.

If a woman suggested that possibly her part of human nature had rights also, as well as powers, she was told, with a forgiving smile, that nature had endowed her with exquisite emotions and remarkable instincts and intuitions, and that heaven designed her to be a lovely vine hanging by delicate tendrils to the sturdy oak of man. This waiting was especially true of the education of women. Toward the close of the century Mrs. John Adams, one of the most highly culti-

*Figures of
Speech!*

vated women of her time, said that "female education in the best families went no further than writing and arithmetic and in some few and rare instances music and dancing." But the general standard even of the best education in this country at the beginning of the century was very low. In the year 1800 although there were perhaps twenty-five institutions in the Union, called colleges, most of them were little more than high schools, and all together they did not graduate, probably, five hundred students annually. Noah Webster said, "We may be said to have no learning at all, or a mere smattering, * * * as to libraries we have no such things;" and George Ticknor, only twenty-six years ago, said that good school books were rare in Boston, which seems to us to-day much like saying that good diamonds are rare in Golconda—while a copy of Euripides, he said, could not be bought at any book-seller's nor a German book found in the College at Cambridge—a situation to be paralleled in the im-

agination only by Paris without the opera or Epsom without the races. If the scholastic diet of men at that day was so meagre we can imagine what that of women must have been.

But the protest of feeling had already begun. Eighty years ago, reviewing, in the *Edinburgh*, Mr. Thomas Broadhurst's *Advice to Young Ladies on the improvement of the mind*, a title which might have described the books that were read by the good young ladies in Miss Austen's novels, Sydney Smith said, that the immense disparity which existed between the knowledge of men and women admitted of no rational defence, because, said the sensible canon, "nature has been as bountiful of understanding to one sex as the other." While he was writing, Mrs. Emma Willard—whose name should be always held in honor at Vassar and at every similar institution in the world—was improving the minds of young ladies at a school in Vermont, and a few years afterward founded, also upon the banks of the Hudson, the Troy

Female Seminary. This was a conspicuous advance in the scope and conception of such academies at that day. But the time was ripe for Mrs. Willard, as it was for Columbus and for every leader of civilization. In the year after the opening of the Troy Academy, Miss Catherine Beecher, at Hartford, began her higher school for young women, and at the same time Mary Lyon was already teaching in New Hampshire. These schools showered the seed of the higher education of women all over the country, and Mary Lyon cherished the hope of a school "which should be to young women what a college is to young men," and by patient devotion and persistence she modestly founded at last the Mount Holyoke Seminary.

Simultaneously with the opening of the schools of Mrs. Willard and Miss Beecher began the agitation for a Girl's High School in Boston, as a part of the public school system of that city. With careful economy of the city resources, girls had been permitted to attend the public schools in summer, when there

were not boys enough to fill them. But a pressure for a more generous education had arisen and such was the persistent and unwomanly zeal for knowledge, that after a prolonged debate of three years a High School was established. The onset of girls bent upon higher education was overwhelming. Like the astounded Mr. Barnacle in *Little Dorrit*, the city fathers were confronted by a persistent crowd of scholars that wanted to know, you know.

The Mayor in dismay announced that "two hundred and eighty-six candidates had presented themselves for admission, while the applications for the Boy's High School had never exceeded ninety and the greatest number of boys ever admitted in one year was eighty-four." But such immoderate zeal for knowledge was never known, not only of geography and history, of the multiplication table and vulgar fractions, but even of chemistry and natural philosophy. What was to be done? What if these daring girls should demand to study Latin and Greek?

What if they should insist upon Euclid and La Place? Zoölogy and moral philosophy and even astronomy itself might follow. The prospect was appalling. The awful question probably presented itself to the City Fathers, what if Boston women should come to know more than Boston men? Suppose there should arise a Board of Alderwomen, what would become of Boston? As the good old deacon used to say, "Suppose, fellow-sinners, you should wake up to-morrow morning and find yourselves dead, what would you say then?" The situation became intolerable and in eighteen months the Boston High School for Girls was closed because there was so great a multitude of eager scholars. The Mayor attested the general awakening of public sentiment reversing Mrs. Barbauld's gentle gospel, "Your best, your sweetest empire is to please," by saying "it is just as impracticable to give a classical education to all the girls of the city whose parents would wish them to be thus educated at the

7 June 18

expense of the city as to give such a one to all the boys at the city's expense. No funds of any city could endure the expense of it."

About sixty years ago, then, public opinion had so far advanced that Oberlin College, in Ohio, was chartered in 1834, and apparently the first collegiate diploma granted to a woman in this country was at Oberlin in 1838. In this college young men and young women were associated in study. Oberlin was the first institution to try the experiment of co-education. Horace Mann, the American apostle of common school education, became President of Antioch College, also in Ohio, in 1853, and spoke of co-education there as his great experiment. In the previous year Lombard University, in Illinois, was chartered with absolute equality of its privileges between the sexes.

These were undoubtedly frontier outposts of changing public sentiment regarding the education of women. But meanwhile, in 1836, the legislature of Georgia chartered a college for women at Macon, which for some mysterious

reason was called the Georgia Female College. Women are undoubtedly females, but no more so than men are males. The word college does not admit the distinction of sex, and there is no more propriety in calling Vassar a female college than Yale or Columbia a male college. Upon a most valuable and excellent institution in the city of New York there is a sign which announces that a reading-room for males and females is to be found within. But whether designed for equine males or bovine females is not stated. Besides the Georgia college for women there was a Wesleyan College, in Ohio, incorporated in 1846, and in 1848 the Mary Sharp College at Winchester, in Tennessee, while the Elmira College, in New York, graduated its first class in 1859.

These facts and dates are interesting not as incident to any controversy of priority, but as illustrations of a changing public sentiment. The test of civilization is the estimate of woman. The measure of that estimate is the degree of practical acknowledgment of her equal liberty of

choice and action with men, and nothing is historically plainer than that the progress of moral and political liberty since the reformation has included a consequent and constant movement for the abolition of every arbitrary restraint upon the freedom of women. It has been, indeed, very gradual. Compliment and incredulity have persistently bowed out justice and reason. But as usual the exiles have steadily returned stronger and more resolute. Their first definite demand was that of education. For this they have pleaded against tradition, prejudice, scepticism, ridicule and superstition. There has been bitter contention not only over the end but the means. Profuse eloquence and wit and learning have been expended in the discussion of the comparative excellence of co-education or separate education, of the limitations and conditions which nature herself has prescribed to the range and degree of education for women, of the divine intentions, and of the natural sphere of the sexes.

In this ardent but ludicrous debate there have been as many theorizers as theories. The gen-

tlemen of Charles II.'s court thought that women were educated enough if they could spell out the recipes of pies and puddings, the manufacture of which nature had entrusted to their tender mercies. Lord Byron did not like to see women eat because he thought angels should be superior to beef and beer, and it is still a very popular current belief that it is the sphere of lovely woman

"To eat strawberries, sugar and cream,
Sit on a cushion and sew up a seam."

This debate of the sphere of the sexes as determining the character and limits of education is very amusing. For if the sexes have spheres, there really seems to be no more reason to apprehend that women will desert their sphere than men. I have not observed any general anxiety lest men should steal away from their workshops and offices that they may darn the family stockings or cook the dinner, and I see no reason to suppose that it will be necessary to chain women to the cradle to prevent their insisting upon running locomotives or shipping before

the mast. We may be very sure that we shall never know the sphere of any responsible human being until he has perfect freedom of choice and liberty of growth. All we can clearly see is that the intellectual capacity of women is an inexplicable waste of reserved power if its utmost education is justly to be deprecated as useless or undesirable.

Our dogmatism in sheer speculation is constantly satirized by history. Education was not more vehemently alleged to be absurd for women than political equality to be dangerous for men. Happily our own century has played havoc with both beliefs however sincerely supposed to be ordinances of nature. The century began with saying contemptuously that women do not need to be educated to be dutiful wives and good mothers. A woman, it said, can dress prettily and dance gracefully even if she cannot conjugate the Greek verbs in *mi* ; and the ability to calculate an eclipse would not help her to keep cream from feathering in hot weather. But grown older and wiser the century asks, as it

ends, "Is it then true that ignorant women are the best wives and mothers? Does good wifehood consist exclusively in skillful baking and boiling, and neat darning and patching? No," says the enlightened century; "if the more languages a man hath the more man is he, the more knowledge a woman hath the better wife and mother is she." And if any sceptic should ask, "but can delicate woman endure the hardship of a college course of study?" it is a woman who ingeniously turns the flank of the questioner with a covert sarcasm at her own sex;—"I would like you to take thirteen hundred young men, and lace them up, and hang ten to twenty pounds of clothes upon their waists, perch them on three-inch heels, cover their heads with ripples, chignons, rats and mice, and stick ten thousand hair-pins into their scalps. If they can stand all this they will stand a little Latin and Greek."

"While I was musing," says the Psalmist, "the fire burned." While the controversy of woman blew high and low, common sense

*There
a certain
novelty
which
holds the
audience*

Humor

steadily prevailed and public opinion ripened. There are always watchmen on high towers of observation who foretell the approach of change. Like the muezzin in the minaret of the mosque, they wake while others sleep. But the spirit of an age is shown, not in the foresight of its wiser men and the dreams and hopes of the few, but in its general disposition and thought. It is not the arbutus and the early violet of doubtful April which assure us that summer has come, but the whole blossoming landscape and the halcyon air of June. So it seems to me the maturity of public sentiment in this country in regard to the education of women is admirably illustrated in the foundation of this institution. Matthew Vassar was not a student nor a scholar, nor were his familiar associations those of the University and intellectual life. From his childhood he was immersed in business and trade. Sturdy, upright, faithful, sagacious, he was an admirable representative of what Lincoln happily called "the plain people" who have given to

this country its distinctive character. His life and thought undoubtedly reflected the general tendency of the time and the community in which he lived. The public sentiment of an old American community like this is always intelligent and progressive in a degree which is often unknown until it is demonstrated either by some emergency like that of the civil war, or by some individual act.

There are great names in the history of New York, names illustrious from the character and service of those who bore them, names fondly familiar as those of fathers and leaders of the state. But among the most eminent of such citizens whom the old English phrase described as Worthies, eminent for the significance and value of their services in a sphere which has none of the exciting glamor of military achievement or political renown, are Ezra Cornell and Matthew Vassar. One day during the debate in the last Constitutional Convention of this State upon the proposed clause in regard to Cornell University, I was sitting by Mr. Cornell, and

when one of the speakers quoted a Latin phrase Mr. Cornell turned to me and said, "What does that mean? Fortunately for me the answer was not difficult, and when I explained, he said quietly, "If I can have my way, nobody in this state hereafter need be obliged to ask that question." The city of Leyden, after its heroic deliverance from the grasp of Spain, commemorated its rescue, you remember, not by a statue nor a monument of bronze or marble, but by the establishment of a university. It was the same lofty impulse which moved these two plain republican citizens of New York to devote the results of their sagacious and prosperous industry not to their personal aggrandisement, but to the permanent benefit of others.

"I challenge any lover of Massachusetts," said a great patriot and scholar at the centenary of the battle of Concord and Lexington, "to read the fifty-ninth chapter of Bancroft's History without tears of joy." It is the chapter which describes the beginning of the Revolution. With something of the same feeling I may say

that I challenge any lover of New York or of the American character to read the first communication of Matthew Vassar to the trustees of this college without profound gratitude and admiration. In his simple words, unconsciously to himself, speaks the truest spirit of his time and country. "It occurred to me that woman having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development." These words might well be carved in gold over the entrance of Vassar College. The fundamental truth which settles the controversy about the education of women was never more completely and exclusively expressed, and like all fundamental truths when once adequately stated, it is simple and indisputable. Yet in that controversy, if he heeded it at all, Mr. Vassar had taken no part. The conflict with tradition and the logical consequences which his views involved, if they occurred to him, did not trouble him. "I consider," he said, "that the mothers of a country mould the character of its citizens,

determine its institutions and shape its destiny." The duty and the necessity of the thorough training of all their faculties were therefore to his mind, unquestionable. If anybody was anxious about the sphere of woman, Mr. Vassar was not. Reason and observation had revealed it. As there was no doubt that it was for the interest of society that men should be thoroughly trained morally, intellectually, and industrially, there could be no doubt that such training was equally desirable for women, except upon the theory which advancing civilization had steadily abjured.

Mr. Vassar's declaration twenty-five years ago is the satisfactory evidence that public sentiment has reached the conviction which his few and unqualified words announce. Those words quietly set aside forever the practice of the Boston High School admitting girls when boys did not want the places. They signaled the end of the tradition which had produced the immense disparity that Sydney Smith declared admitted of no defence, be-

tween the knowledge of men and women. They disposed of all the banter about he-women and crowing hens, a banter which has always an uneasy air of anxiety, as if those who invoked it were a little doubtful of their ability to hold their own in an equal encounter with trained wits. Mr. Vassar's words assumed that if Hypatia were not unsexed by teaching philosophy and mathematics in the most celebrated school in the world, Maria Mitchell would be only more of a woman than ever, in teaching other women to bind the sweet influences of Pleiades and to hear the morning stars sing together. "For the last thirty years," said Mr. Vassar, "the standard of education for the sex has been constantly rising in the United States." The chief obstruction was want of ample endowment. "It is my hope," said he, "to be the instrument in the hand of Providence of founding an institution which shall accomplish for young women what our colleges are accomplishing for young men."

To this result something more than the name and form of a college is indispensable ; something more than ample buildings and stately towers and monastic aisles, which touch the poet's heart like "sweet strains and pensive smiles ;" something more than reverend quadrangles of cloistered seclusion, more than romantic suggestion, and the shadowy tradition of a thousand years. These are the accumulating graces and charms with which time and association gradually invest an institution of learning, as the moss gathers upon walls in whose shadow Isaac Newton mused, and whose clustering vines, a slip, perhaps, from a country church-yard, Gray trained and tended. But to a great university two things are essential, first and foremost of all, the teachers, and then the endowment. The teachers, however, are the school. Even Croesus could not found a great university, although he wrought its walls with gold, if he could not place in them great and accomplished teachers. But wherever Erasmus or Colet, in the time of the new

learning, or in our own day, Agassiz or Faraday, or Benjamin Pierce, or Tayler Lewis, might have taught, there would have been a university.

The movement of opinion which lifted Mr. Vassar to his happy design had already produced, as we have seen, seminaries and even colleges for women. But admirable as schools, and significant as they were of the tendencies of thought, the adequate resource and comprehensive scheme which surround the teacher with all the appliances of teaching, were here first fully and properly supplied. I do not depreciate the smaller colleges. To them the debt of this country is incalculable. The colonial colleges were little more than high schools, but they were the nurseries of patriots and patriotism, and from them came in large part the leadership of the Revolution and the construction of the Constitution. In his famous plea for Dartmouth College in the Supreme Court of the United States, Daniel Webster, its most famous graduate, spoke of it with



filial and personal tenderness, and a suppressed emotion which was profoundly impressive. In the earnestness of his appeal, addressing Chief Justice Marshall individually, he said, with a breaking voice, "Sir, it is a small college—and yet—there are those who love it." Then he paused, silent, with an emotion which for some moments also overpowered the Court and the hushed and sympathetic audience.

The emotion and the sympathy are intelligible. No man loves his *Alma Mater* less because of her straightened circumstances. The colonial colleges were suited to the time and to its spirit and requirements, and their influence upon our national development has been profound and enduring. But the requirements of a later time are different. Vassar College a century ago would have been impossible. But if now at the end of a quarter of a century from the opening of its doors, the Founder, as he naturally liked to be called, should visibly return, and sitting here should contemplate his work and closely survey the

record of this college, would he regret his high resolve and wish that he had given it another form? His deliberate decision founded this institution which was at once the test of the accuracy with which he apprehended the drift of the sentiment of his time, and one of its strongest confirmations. Was he wrong in believing that the time had come for opening to women the opportunity of the highest education? Vassar asks. Smith and Wellesley and Bryn Mawr, Holyoke and Barnard College, and all the opening college doors and opening minds of trustees and faculties, the professional schools for women, and fellowships and endowments, and vanishing sophistries and prejudices, and the extending empire of common sense, all answer. Even the good old conservative stock of our Columbia College, the scholastic home of Hamilton and Jay, of Gouverneur Morris and DeWitt Clinton, brilliantly blossoms into degrees for women, and as the other older collegiate nurseries of our education feel the

gentle feminine pressure which holds their hesitating gates ajar, the chorus of manly voices within begins to murmur, "If women are not afraid of us, why should we be afraid of women?"

Elsewhere in the world the spectacle is the same. In the shadow of venerable Oxford and Cambridge in England, Girton and Newnham Colleges share the equal facilities of the universities, and both the great universities have extended themselves by establishing throughout the kingdom examinations to which multitudes of studious girls resort, and as the water in the remotest coves and bays upon the sea shore is lifted by the rising tide, so by these examinations and by those of the civil service, the standard of all English schools is raised. In Germany, as Miss Emma Atkinson Almy tells us in a recent paper, women ask entrance for scientific study into the universities of Prussia, Wurtemberg and Bavaria. The government hesitates, but sends an envoy to inquire into the methods and workings of the English colleges for women,

while the Victoria Lyceum at Berlin has established a course and methods of study which would naturally develop into a university ending in a state examination and diploma. In France the higher schools for women are constantly higher still, and at the Educational Congress in Paris during the Exposition of last year women were as valued counsellors as in our late National Conference of Charities at Baltimore, or upon State Boards and School Committees. The University of Paris opens its doors to women in certain studies, and the London University does not hesitate. The universities of Australia are open to women upon equal terms with men. Canada in many of her chief schools gives equal advantages, and to Switzerland, home of the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty, Miss Almy says the aspiring young women of Germany resort to secure the education which as yet their fatherland denies, while the Spanish and Italian Universities do not disdain to train women in special studies, and Northern Europe provides schools

for women of constantly higher grades, and obeys the wise and kindly spirit of the age. Surveying the spectacle, Vassar asks tranquilly, "Was not the time ripe for me?" and on both sides of the ocean and in all civilized lands, the air is astir with the music of the response—

"And Jura answers from her misty shroud

Back to the joyous Alps that call to her aloud."

But that this day and occasion consecrated to congratulation upon the opening of the college for women should not want their distinctive triumph, we hear that within the week at English Cambridge amid tumults of enthusiastic acclamation Philippa Fawcett the daughter of Henry Fawcett, the late British Post Master General and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, has won the highest University honor in mathematics, receiving four hundred marks more than the Senior Wrangler.

All this and these may seem to offer some satisfactory answer to our question of the Founder returned to contemplate his great

hope and noble purpose. But there is yet a final question. Conceding that his act was justified by the conviction and the desire of his time—still, were they not mistaken, was not the foreboding of doubt a forecast of truth, and the warning of ancient tradition a voice which should have been heeded? Matthew Vassar was an emancipator. To those who, comparatively speaking, had sat in darkness he gave light. But are not those now justified who winced at the shining of the light? That is the question. Has this larger liberty of education, this freedom of choice, this devoted and successful study, this winning of the scholastic palm and proud decoration of the degree, has all this, either in the persons of the students themselves, or in the general effect upon their sex and upon the estimate of it, justified in any point the sorrowful anticipations which seemed to regard the opening gates of the highest education for women as the flood gates of a torrent of evils which should sweep away the loveliness

and grace and essential charm of womanhood?) Since Vassar opened its door a quarter of a century ago, has there been a marked tendency among American women to abandon domestic life, and to attempt occupations for which they are not fitted? Or to state it to you *ad femi-nam*, is it true that upon the gates of this college must be written a doom as mournful as that which the Dantean words decree? Whoever enters here, must she leave behind the fairest hope for woman or for man? Is it then true that her essential and enduring charm is so cruelly perplexed that to be an angel she must be less than woman? Is that the curse of Paradise, the endless price of the fatal apple?

Truth and experience laugh the question to scorn and scatter the cloud of foolish rhetoric about the sphere and duty and capacity and divine intention of woman as if upon that particular subject men were in the counsels of the Almighty and women were carefully excluded. There is no surer sign of a more

liberal civilization and a wiser world than the perception that the bounds of legitimate womanly interest and activity are not to be set by men as heretofore to mark their own convenience and pleasure. The tradition of the lovely incapacity of woman reflects either the sensitive apprehension or the ignoble abasement of man. The progressive amelioration of the laws that have always restricted her equality of right, the quick exposure and censure of statutes which will outrage the instinct of justice and fair play, the enlarging range of her industrial occupations, and, like towering ice-bergs melting in a warmer air, the vanishing in more generous thought of prejudices and follies of opinion that once seemed insuperable, these are those signs in the heavens that were held to be unmistakable and irreversible.

More visible, and perhaps in some sense more persuasive and conclusive than these, is the verdict of literature, which unconsciously records the highest and final judgment of an

age. The women of to-day, as reflected in the genius of the philosophical historian and artist of current society whom we call novelist, is a very different figure from the woman of the eighteenth century novel. Indeed that novel was not written for her. She was not expected to read it, and if we fancy Cowper and Mrs. Unwin reading *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, we only see that Mrs. Unwin was very unlike the educated matron of to-day, while in Goldsmith's *Vicar*, the purest idyl of them all, we still hear the tone of the time, the thin refrain of the baby house in the nursery, "Your best, your sweetest empire is to please." It is a fresher air, a sweeter music that breathes through the English novel of to-day, and it is in the literature of the English tongue as in the feeling of the English speaking race that we must look for the true contemporaneous position of woman.

These are all the happy harbingers of the tranquil and conclusive adjustment of what

Margaret Fuller nearly fifty years ago called the great lawsuit of man against men, woman against women. It is a case called long since in the highest court of justice and appealed from age to age. But observe how curiously the plain good sense of Matthew Vassar in 1862 responds to the words of the most learned and accomplished woman of her time in America twenty years before. The demand of woman, she said, with proud and subtle scorn, is not poetic incense ; every woman can receive that from her lover. It is not life-long sway, every woman by becoming a coquette, a shrew or a good cook, can secure that. It is not money, nor notoriety, nor badges of authority. These may be sometimes sought by women but they are not the demand of woman. Her demand is "for that which is the birth-right of every being capable to receive it : the freedom, the religious, the intelligent freedom of the Universe, to use its means, to learn its secret as far as nature has enabled her, with God alone for her guide

and her judge." In these words Margaret Fuller said nothing which Matthew Vassar did not say. But they were mutually unknown. Probably he had never heard her name and she was dead long before his name was known. But when the word and act of such a man unconsciously confirm the thought of such a woman, it is because the common sense of man apprehends the deepest and most essential feeling of woman. Her feeling is not that of a goddess nor of an houri, whatever their feelings may be, but that of a human being. In a few simple words the whole woman question was solved by the clear-minded man and the thoughtful woman.

It was before she had written the paper while she was yet a young woman, that, as a boy in Providence, where she had come to be a teacher in a classical school, supporting herself and her brothers whom she educated, I first saw Margaret Fuller. She was already the friend of scholars and famous men and noble women, and her wit and wisdom and

extraordinary accomplishment easily dominated the brilliant society of the city. She was a woman of delightful humor and gayety of manner, and as it was said of Burns that the charm of his conversation called travellers at the inn from their beds at midnight to listen, I have heard Margaret Fuller keep a company of young persons on a journey constantly enthralled by her racy wit and humorous intelligence. A scholar, a critic, a thinker, a teacher, a queen of conversation, above all a person of delicate insight and sympathy, the wisest of friends, of the utmost feminine refinement of feeling, and of dauntless spiritual courage, she seems to me still the figure of Woman in the nineteenth century, which was the title of her best known paper.

Daughters of Vassar, such is the woman, I doubt not, whom Matthew Vassar vaguely foresaw when his generous heart inspired him to his noble task. It is the woman that as a lofty ideal presides over the studious hours and quiet meditations of these halls. It is

the woman of the nineteenth century whom the other centuries foretold. The old times, indeed, were good, but the new times are better. We have left woman as a slave with Homer and Pericles. We have left her as a foolish goddess with Chivalry and Don Quixote. We have left her as a toy with Chesterfield and the club; and in the enlightened American daughter, wife, and mother, in the free American home, we find the fairest flower and the highest promise of American civilization.

THE FUTURE OF THE WOMAN'S COLLEGE.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED ON COMMENCEMENT
DAY BY PRESIDENT JAMES M. TAYLOR.

It is almost impossible for those who have grown up within a generation to understand the varied hopes and fears which greeted the announcement of the opening of Vassar College. After admitting fully the earnestness and the value of the efforts to give a collegiate education to women before that time, it must be confessed that they were accompanied by discouragements, by lack of appreciation, and by a general failure to advance their standards, due to popular indifference and unbelief. The foundation of Vassar, with its endowments and broad equipment, warranting the hope that it might realize the ideals which many a man and woman had beheld in vision, attracted the attention of the educated world, and drew forth, at once, a response from friends and foes of the new

movement. The chance of success gave it the color of novelty; forces which had been gathering slowly united now; ideas began to transform themselves into fact; there seemed to be a new thing under the sun.

For a quarter of a century Vassar and its successors have done battle against misconception, misconstruction, unbelief, and sheer ignorance. The woman's college has met, in turn, the physical, mental, social and moral arguments against woman's education. To the assurance that it would result in physical wreck, it has pointed to statistics, to facts, to young women in better health than the average of their class outside the colleges. To the assertion that woman cannot be educated to the level of young men, it has answered with its honestly enforced curricula of studies, and with its graduates. To the fear that social life would be robbed of its pleasantness, and domestic life of its attractions, it has replied with its cultivated, refined women, and with its large percentage of marriages and happy

homes. To the danger of moral and religious defection, it answers with scorn to the believer in *any* education, and with emphatic denial to the merely fearful and timid.

It has not finished its apologetic age. Perhaps that is true of all college education in the midst of an age marked by the greed of material comfort and success. But at least to-day we may put objectors behind us, and let the dead past bury its dead. If, anon, we must turn again to meet some belated reasoner, if we must still do pioneer work in many a section of our land, yet to-day our faces are toward the future, and strong in our faith, and glad in a proud present, we forget the things that are behind, and press onward.

What of the future of the Woman's College, and of the education it shall represent?

Although the college moulds and forms the opinion of its generation, it is not less true that it also reflects its spirit and tendencies. Public opinion has been rapidly shifting

for twenty-five years gone, and great changes have taken place in the popular regard for whole realms of study once deemed the essentials of education. These changes have made themselves felt in every progressive college of our land. Practical studies, Brod-studien, so-called, have been forced into greater prominence, the worth of neglected departments of knowledge has been strongly asserted, and the demand for more room for them in the curriculum of the college has been made with an irresistible emphasis. It could not be that the effort to adjust the college to this new demand would be accomplished without friction and much disorder. There was a distinctive American College when Vassar was established; to-day that college may exist, but every progressive institution has moved away from the old foundations, and, as yet, no general agreement has been reached as to the best form for the college of the coming century. It is not too strong an expression to use of our educational system to call it chaotic. What shall

be the outcome? what the general form of the cosmos that is sure to be, ere long?

Certain lines of cleavage already appear to be fairly distinct. The elective system of study has secured a hold on the future, although its precise limitations are far from settled. But as adjusting itself to individual needs and idiosyncrasies, as allowing a latitude in the curriculum otherwise impossible, as inciting to greater interest and larger independence in the student, there can be no question as to its permanence. The most ardent admirer of the old system must admit the poverty of the curriculum under which those of us who entered college twenty-five years ago, or more, were educated, and the comparative uselessness of a large amount of study through which we were forced, at an age when we were capable of doing serious and independent work in lines better suited to our tastes and powers. There is a mean, assuredly, between the abolition of all restraint on the young student and the theory that

we ought to be obliged to pursue the very things which are distasteful to us, a theory which has in it a certain very thin vein of truth, but which has no more general application to the mind's life than it has to the physical desires and tendencies.

The elective system has become the doom of the old college, and suggests the lines on which the new will form. The American college of the coming generation will be a well-defined union of the college and the university, and this will be made possible by the progress of the secondary schools. They have made remarkable advance in the past twenty years, and are so improving their methods, and are accomplishing so much more than formerly that we have every reason to hope that the coming generation will be readier for college work at an age earlier than is now customary. This seems to be demanded by the conditions of our society and by the interests of the young. It is undesirable that our preparatory work shall be so extended

as to postpone the earlier, and compulsory, work of our first college years to a time so late as practically to exclude the most of our youth from the broader training of the later course, or else to send them forth from our professional schools, or into business, or even into social careers, at an age too advanced to give them a fair chance in the competition of life, even if it does not also diminish greatly their adaptability to the new conditions in which they find themselves.

Better teaching and better methods have already done much to meet this demand. The vast improvement in the mode of classical training in our schools, the addition of instruction in elementary science, the courses in English, superior to those in most of our colleges twenty years ago, are signs of the better era. Before long we shall also learn that time can be saved in the earlier education of boys and girls. The absurdly exaggerated prominence given to arithmetic, for example, will be corrected, with a consequent

saving of much valuable time. Still better methods of teaching English and History will save more, and with the diffusion of the advanced methods of classical teaching now in use in our best schools, there is every reason why the average age of entrance to college should be reduced by at least an entire year, unless, indeed, the colleges shall insist, mistakenly, upon an advance, *pari passu*, of their requirements, in the face of what seems to be a reasonable popular demand.

But it will never be possible to develop the general high school, or the corresponding private school, in its necessary relations to the public, to a point where it can take the place of the earlier college years. Much less will it be possible to furnish in any school that atmosphere or influence which constitutes so important an element in the value of a college training. The college alone can accomplish the desired result, and the American college will do it more successfully, because of the influences of the strictly university por-

tion of its curriculum on the prescribed work, and because of the presence among the younger students of those pursuing the broader and more independent work of the upper classes.

There is some question as to the time in the course when the methods of university study will supplant those appropriate to the college. The probabilities point now to the beginning of our present Junior year,—or even to the middle of the Sophomore. At least it seems assured that the type of college toward which we are moving will combine with about two years of prescribed work an entirely elective course of two years more,—that all prescribed study, and all work in large classes, will fall below the period now marked by the beginning of the Junior year,—and that beyond that time the student will be left absolutely free in his choice among a large number of electives, in some of which he will do independent work with the minimum of the constraint essential in the preparatory years. A

broader basis of scholarship, higher ideals of student life, and larger facilities in our colleges, will make possible what now would be, in most of our institutions, an encouragement of superficiality and ignorance.

It is not forgotten that there are colleges which already closely approximate this general ideal, but no one familiar with our educational literature will think that there is anything like a settled plan in the movement. It has been largely a hap-hazard advance,—one institution following another, and all influenced most largely by the example of Harvard. But the signs of the times indicate that the future college will be a definite union of the two systems now united in an indefinite and chaotic way. Now we are trying, too frequently, to do university work on the basis of the crude preparation of the student fresh from the school. Then we shall have a secure foundation, a thorough training,—better at eighteen years of age than it was at twenty a quarter of a century ago.

Nor, again, has it been forgotten that Harvard College, which has been the chief influence, thus far, in the movement of the new education, has recently suggested a new line of possible development in the shortening of the college course. It is perhaps too soon to speak with definiteness on a yet unsettled point, but if the movement shall succeed at Cambridge it does not seem possible that it can be followed by any influential number of American colleges. It may hasten the day when Harvard shall throw off all that is distinctively characteristic of a *college*, and make itself a university, in every sense, but it is impossible—at a time when the general cry is for a higher standard of American scholarship,—it is impossible that the leaders of our American colleges shall consent to a step which would imply, if it became general among them, the lowering of requirements for the Baccalaureate degree, and the reduction of the college toward the grade of the preparatory school. And even if the alternative were possible, and

the Freshman work were to be demanded from the schools, it still would remain true, as has just been said, that the failure of the school to give the college influence would be a distinct loss to education. But the public would not tolerate such an increased curriculum in the school, and the colleges generally cannot consent to a diminution of their work. The Harvard plan is not yet all seen, but it cannot be a plan for the American college.

There will be exceptions to the type described. Some colleges will confine themselves entirely to university methods of investigation and instruction, but of necessity they will be few. For many a year there will not be demand enough to warrant the effort to maintain more than a very few universities. The number of students in America who can give the time to the more advanced work is small now, and will not be large, probably for years to come, and if the American college generally is allured by the example of

these exceptional institutions the result will be disastrous to a sound education in college and university alike. The most optimistic observer knows that among the university students at these various centers are many whose training does not warrant them a place in a true university.

The mass of our best colleges will do the double work of college and university, and will thus meet the general demands of American scholarship. The strong foreign influence which we have been feeling will decrease. Even if the suspicion does not arise that the university system of Germany in much of its detail is not an ideal system of education, the conviction will grow that it is not fitted to the conditions of our American life; that its best features may be appropriated and engrafted on our present system without the absurdly illogical effort to convey the German university to a land which has not the German gymnasium. Scholars from the German university frequently declare that they

attended the lectures but little and devoted themselves to the seminar. Our coming university, it is to be hoped, will make more use of this most potent engine of advanced education, in which the free intercourse of teacher and student may be ideal in its advantages, and less of the method of lecturing which many seem to think the chief feature of a university, but which, as a method, is of least profit to the student. And yet the introduction of this method of instruction even for immature students seems thus far to have been one of the chief results of the work of over-zealous advocates of imitation of foreign methods. We must better the American school, we must advance the American college, and we must have the American university; but while we learn from others we need not be imitators, and in our eagerness for a high standard of education we should not forget that we are educating, not an abstract person, but a boy and girl

who are products and part of the peculiar life of America.

What relation has all this to the future of the Woman's College? It is the indication of what that future shall be.

The question as to whether women shall have the same kind of education as men is still regarded by some as an open one. No one, however, has yet given good evidence that the broad requirements essential for the mental training of a boy are less essential for the groundwork of the mental life of womanhood. The high school and academy discover no such differences as to demand different training, and the college, in the view here presented, will develop those lines of work to an extent warranting the belief that the student may be left to independent choice. The elective system will thus meet any fancied demands for variety in woman's training, but on the foundations solidly laid, and not, as of yore, on a groundwork of superficiality and unestablished theory.

Indeed, one product of the coming generation of woman's education will doubtless be the conviction among educators, already largely prevailing, that in education we have one problem, not two, a problem concerning the welfare of a personality, and on its mental side involving no discussion of differences broad enough, or definite enough, to warrant a consideration of different methods or curricula. The crude hypotheses of the past still survive, but they are rapidly ceasing to be working hypotheses, and the products of our women's colleges will soon give them their death-blow.

What shall be the extent of the curriculum of the future college? Its sole limitations shall be those compelled by the time of the course and by the maturity of the student.

The fact that we deal with comparatively immature minds needs to be urged upon the attention of many of our modern dreamers. The danger of the young specialist is too

often seen in practice to need much emphasis here. A well-known teacher in a leading university has recently remarked upon the spectacle presented by his own graduates, specialists, introducing into high schools the methods of the university,—a sight familiar enough to those who know the schools, and suggestive of a certain danger in immature specializing of work not enough considered, the danger of divorcing the interest of the young specialist from a general education. For, after all has been said, the mere specialist is in no sense a well educated man. We may be thankful that there are men willing to spend a life on the dative case, but Heaven forefend us from the conception of education which is based on such examples, or finds its ideals in such narrow specialism.

The curriculum of the American college will continue to aim at a *general* education, and at a moderate amount of specialism on the basis of such a broad training. It will train the average scholar, and its graduate

courses and the general universities will open the way to the fullest development of the specializing tendencies of the few.

It has already been intimated that the curriculum of the earlier college years must follow the lines of the subjects everywhere recognized as essential to liberal training,—language and literature and history, science and philosophy. That is not affirming that these must be doled out after the methods formerly current. That all of these will be required seems axiomatic, but there is room within these requirements for a larger freedom than has been customary.

Observation and experience may have demonstrated that a general education demands some scientific training, but it is not shown thereby that every boy or girl shall study Botany. Linguistic training is essential, but not training in two particular languages. And to study history does not necessarily mean the study of Greece and Rome only. Prescription, that is, may grow in very definite lines and

not be the same for all. But whether by an old-fashioned prescribed system, or by a modified group system suited to the capacity and needs of young students, the college must hold the student to a definite education in these old lines that represent the mental and moral needs of human nature, or it will fail to give a broad and well balanced training, or to open to the mind the great vistas of knowledge,—and surely these are among the most precious results of education.

Nothing save time and want of money need limit the elective system based on this training and filling the two remaining years. New subjects of investigation will appear; there will be room for all. One who recalls the subjects that have enriched our curricula within twenty-five years, must have larger hope for the coming quarter of a century. How many colleges of that time offered the study of History, even for a single year? Probably not half a dozen presented the subject of Quaternions. English Literature

was scarcely known among them. Biology was unheard of, and indeed has not yet conquered its place in most. When one reflects on the wealth of opportunity now afforded at our leading colleges, the various courses in English, the special departments within every special science, the philological work offered in connection with both ancient and modern languages, the broad extension of the courses in history, the altogether new phases of psychological problems, the awakening interest in Biblical study, the attractive courses in music and art, one sees that all the cycle of knowledge will be open to the students of the future, and that their limits, even within the four years of a college course, will be only those of their own capacity. Young people of twenty will never be able to do the work of those of forty, whatever their improvement and opportunities, but they will do much better work at twenty than they did who passed out of college twenty years ago. Not only will they be broader scholars, and

illustrate the results of a better system of mental training, but they will be sustained and invigorated by a rational training of the physical powers. The curriculum will come nearer to the old Greek ideals than did that of our fathers, but we shall surpass that, for in our modern Christian civilization the college will recognize the spiritual nature of man in a sense unknown to the ancient world, and will adapt itself to its requirements. A healthful body, a vigorous, well-trained mind, a spiritual nature balanced and strong, a whole manhood, a symmetrical womanhood, will be the aim of the higher education of the coming age.

But in this progress, what of the Woman's College? Can it maintain a like intellectual grade with the colleges for men?

Observe that this is not primarily a question which regards the quality of students. In that respect it has answered itself, in schools, in colleges, at home and abroad; woman has demonstrated her capacity to

maintain her place as a student beside her more favored brother. The question concerns the ability of a Woman's College to maintain a Faculty of intellectual rank equal to that of the college for men. Is the question a real one? Let it be freely admitted that the problem for woman is comparatively new, and that the ideal of the average woman student as to the grade of scholarship needed in a college may not, as yet, be sufficiently high. But let us deal also with facts on the other side. The number of excellent scholars is small, and the number of great scholars who are also great teachers is very small. There is an abundance of *good* scholarship, however, among men, and although there is much less among women, the advance is rapid, and it should be remembered that the commercial worth of it is greatly less than in the case of men. Very, very few places bid for the scholars among women, but they are increasing,—both the scholars and the places.

It has taken time to learn that a college training is not the precise equivalent of broad scholarship, that a special and extensive study, not in the one line merely, but in cognate lines of research, is essential to proficiency, and to professional dignity and worth. It will not be long, for example, before a general study of Literature, in college, will be universally felt to be insufficient for college instruction in English. And yet, even here, be it remembered, the Woman's College has no reason to be humble before the colleges for men.

But now, given the scholarship, who shall say that the training will be inferior to that in other colleges,—that the refined, accurate, discerning mind of woman shall not rival in teaching power the best of her colleagues among men? And why shall she be less in that mightiest and most persistent influence that the true teacher exerts,—the influence of character,—the awakening, inspiring force of mind to kindle, stimulate, and recreate

the ideals which govern the destinies of his students? What possible quality of the true teacher is wanting in the scholarly, inspiring, and inspired woman? The world has been slow to regard woman's education seriously, but the thoughtful man knows that the qualities of woman's mind have made her pre-eminently a *teacher*, and that with the broader opportunities of our day, with scholarship equal to the best, there can be no question of the maintenance in women's colleges of standards as high, as exacting, and as thoroughly maintained, as those in our older institutions for men. If the argument thus far concerns women only, it is because the fear of the fearful is directed to that point. But the chairs in women's colleges are open to men as well as to women. The supply is abundant. What shall forbid the woman's college from commanding the best talent among men, as well as among women? It is chiefly a question of *endowments*,—and *endowments will come*. The day will come, as-

surely, when the wealthy *women* of America will awake as two or three of them, and more men, have awakened, to the claim upon them of this great work of the education of their sex. They will come to see how largely the hope of the future of America lies here, and with that awakening will come every possibility to the woman's college possessed by those for men. Indeed, be it said, that to-day, even with present resources, their facilities for work are beyond those of the average college for young men.

It is alleged, however, that it will be impossible to keep the best talent in these colleges,—that they are isolated, and the opportunities open to the teacher are thus few. The objection is somewhat amusing to one who knows the situations of the major number of our strong American colleges, and who knows the easy access to considerable cities, to say nothing of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, enjoyed by the larger colleges for women. A certain isolation comes

indeed to every busy worker, even in a large city. But this objection will be even less true than now, as these college communities grow and make their own distinctive society, while at easy distances the great libraries, art galleries, and scientific collections of our largest cities—furnish every desired opportunity for special work.

Doubtless the best faculty can always be secured and kept, where it can be paid, and where it has opportunity of usefulness,—and where can there be greater, to one who looks deeply, than here?

We are thus led to ask one more question as to the future of the Woman's College,—what of its social conditions?

The primary question here is precisely that which is agitated by the colleges for men,—the necessity of the dormitory, or the leaving of the student to provide for himself. One woman's college began on the latter plan, and found it unfeasible. It must be accepted as true for young women, at least,

that when away from their homes they must have *a home*. The demands of society for some kind of chaperonage are just and necessary. No right feeling parent can send his daughter into such social conditions as may seem possible for the son.

It may be urged, also, that the true college spirit cannot be gained where the students are scattered. That spirit is no inconsiderable part of the education of the young, and it certainly depends on some central gathering place for social relations. The dormitory would, therefore, seem a desirable and needful part of the social life of the woman's college of the future.

Shall it be the large building or the "cottage"? Both. There are great advantages to be claimed for both. A real cottage system, a cottage accommodating a small family, is impossible because of the expense involved, and the real issue is between a large house and a great building. Because both will meet certain demands, both will continue to form

part of the future college. No method is ideal, but the "caravansary" plan, to use the opprobrious term which has begged and falsified the whole question, has been found full of good for the average student. With a room to every student, the large building bears well the tests of comfort, quiet, and health. It renders the gathering of the body of students easy, and access to libraries, lectures, concerts, chapel, comfortable. These advantages, combined with the saving of expense, will probably make the large building a common feature of the college, while the popular demand for smaller houses will render them also a part of the equipment of these institutions.

But these will not complete the social facilities of the woman's college. The distinctive college community, the homes of men and women connected with the institution, will soon begin to cluster in the neighborhood of the college with the inestimable advantages of a refined society, embraced in

homes distinct from the college building, open to the students, and adding a normal element to their lives,—and affording to instructors a variety quite impossible where all are under the roofs of college buildings. Too much stress cannot be laid upon this phase of our development, sure to be accomplished in the immediate future. The social tone of a woman's college must possess a refinement not so absolutely required in a man's. Society itself, in the best meaning of the word, depends far more on the culture and influence of gracious womanhood than on any power of men. More care is therefore essential in providing the environment of cultivation during college years, and this can be normally secured, in large part, by the presence of a distinctively college community beyond the college walls. The woman's college will forfeit the good will of society, and justly, when it forgets that the education of womanhood means more than the training of the mind to useful thought; and indirectly, never directly, surely in these col-

lege years, the woman's college must always cultivate with care the graces and proprieties of social life. It will fail of its high purpose if it ever makes its aim the education of the teacher, the physician, the business woman. Its high aim is to educate *womanhood*,—womanhood trained in body, mind, and spirit,—womanhood for the school, the sick-room, the social circle, the church, the home,—the woman, who, whatever else she may be, scholar, teacher, journalist, business-manager, wife, mother,—is first of all, and last of all, the refined true woman.

What shall be the attitude of Vassar College in view of the progressive movement?

Let its past answer. Despite the insufficient understanding at times of the great problem, justly termed an experiment, we may yet claim that a steady progress has characterized the educational ideals and labors of the college, that with an income never sufficient to justify rapid advance, and generally insufficient to meet running expenses,

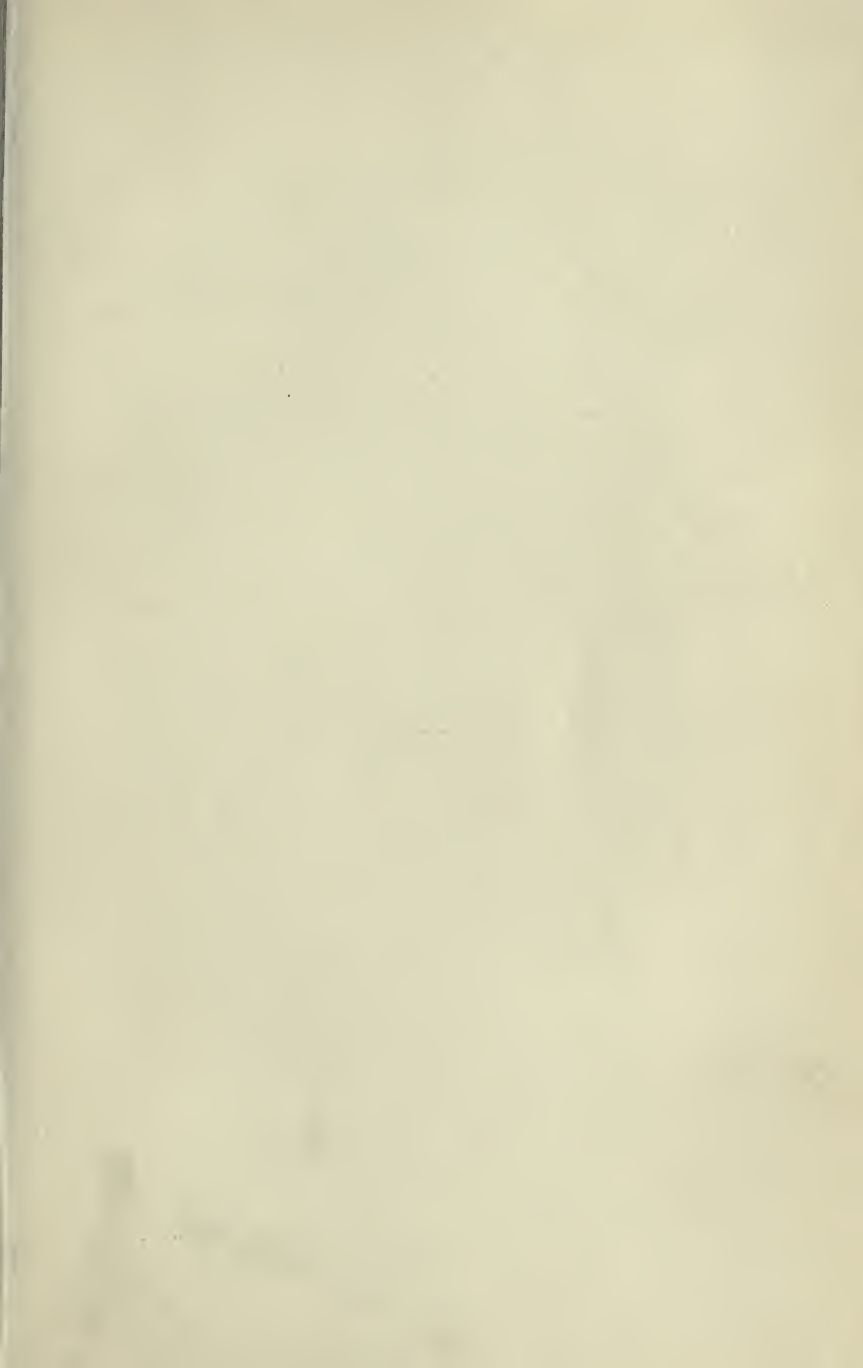
every department of the college stands on a much higher level than was possible ten years ago. Its work has been not merely honest and thorough, it has been *progressive*. It has justified the noble purpose of its founder, and its history makes his splendid gift one of the glories of philanthropy.

If it has accomplished such results in its pioneer years, when it has met misconceptions, and even base slanders, if it has struggled on bravely, doing its work soundly and carefully, and proving its soundness by its fruits,—then what may we not hope for in the better day which is dawning, and from the fuller appreciation of the weighty importance of our labors? If, with scanty funds and danger of debt ever before us, we have established a college on firm foundations, what shall we not hope from the coming years, and the large endowments they will bring? New friends will arise to supplement the efforts of the old. New buildings, new laboratories, new libraries, will grow about us.

Professorships will multiply. Social life will become fuller and richer. And with all this increase will come in growing numbers the graduate student to pursue here her special studies, or with this as a basis and a home, to follow out her chosen lines among the libraries and museums and scientific collections of the neighboring metropolis.

What shall be our limit? The ambition of the Honorable Board, which has so wisely guided the destinies of the college? The past is the answer. The aims and ideals of the Faculty? They have not yet been approximately realized. In the desires and loyalty of the Alumnæ? They cannot be surpassed. All are our pledge to the future that Vassar College, in hearty accord with its sister institutions, shall labor for the broadening and lifting of the life of womankind, and thereby of the entire race, and so shall it more than realize the high thought of its founder, Matthew Vassar.





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